



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Attorney Machen Hosts Town Hall Meeting, Urges Residents to “Stand Up Today to Save a Life Tomorrow” - More Than 100 People Joined in Second of a Series of Events -

WASHINGTON - U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. joined more than 100 District residents at a town hall meeting this week and urged the community to go to authorities with their concerns about crime and then help prosecutors and police do something to stop it.

The discussion took place Thursday, June 2, 2011, at the second in a series of faith-based town hall meetings being held throughout the District of Columbia. U.S. Attorney Machen was joined by clergy leaders, police officials, crime victims, advocates and others from the U.S. Attorney's Office in a session called, “Can We Talk?”

The program was at the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, 3000 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. It gave residents an opportunity to address issues facing their neighborhoods and to hear first-hand how police and prosecutors can work with them to make the community safer.

“It’s a team effort, a partnership,” U.S. Attorney Machen told the crowd. “We need people to come forward to serve as witnesses and jurors ... You have to have the courage to stand up today to save a life tomorrow and we ask you all to do that.”

U.S. Attorney Machen said that a unified effort is needed to combat a mentality that working with law enforcement is “snitching” so that more witnesses come forward with information about crimes. “Citizenship is not ‘snitching,’” he said. “Standing up for the community is not ‘snitching.’ Holding people accountable for their crimes is not ‘snitching.’”

The town hall featured presentations by victims as well as prosecutors and musical selections from the choir of the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church.

During a panel discussion, questions from the audience were answered by a group that included U.S. Attorney Machen; Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Jackson; Commander Joel

Maupin, of the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) Seventh District; Capt. Regis Bryant, of MPD's Sixth District; community resident Veronica Davis; Rev. Donald Isaac, executive director of East of the River Clergy, Police Partnership, Inc., and Dr. Kendrick E. Curry, senior pastor of the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church. Rev. Karen W. Curry, First Lady of the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, moderated the discussion.

The Faith-Based initiative is a partnership between the U.S. Attorney's Office and faith-based leadership in the District of Columbia to encourage the community to become more involved in the criminal justice system in a variety of ways, including as witnesses and jurors. The initiative was launched in September 2010 at a meeting of the U.S. Attorney's Office and faith-based leaders East of the River. Dr. Curry was among leaders at that meeting.

The U.S. Attorney's Office hosted its first town hall meeting on December 11, 2010 at the Matthews Memorial Baptist Church, working with the pastor, Dr. Charles Matthew Hudson, Jr. Dr. Hudson also participated in this week's event.

In closing remarks, Principal Assistant U.S. Attorney Vincent H. Cohen Jr. noted that more events are planned throughout the community, including a youth summit set to take place from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, June 24, 2011 at THEARC, 1901 Mississippi Ave. SE.

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